



Just the Facts

57-016-0595

...About Croup



Croup is an infection of the throat and vocal cords (or larynx). The infection is caused by a virus. When children younger than 5 years of age have the infection, it is called croup. In those older than 5 years of age, it is called laryngitis.

Croup often begins like a cold, but then fever, cough and difficulty breathing develop. The infection causes the lining of the throat and larynx to become red and swollen. The child develops a hoarse voice and a cough that sounds like a bark. The air passage below the vocal cords may narrow, making it difficult for the child to move air in and out. Breathing may then become very rapid and noisy.

In most cases, croup sounds worse than it actually is. However, the child may become very tired because of the extra work it takes to breathe. In severe cases, the child's breathing can be obstructed. Some children become so sick, in fact, that they have to be treated in a hospital. Antibiotics do not work on croup because the infection is caused by a virus.

THINGS PARENTS CAN DO

- ◆ Child Care Facilities
- ◆ Information/Guidance
- ◆ Symptoms

- ◆ If you suspect your child has croup, contact your physician.
- ◆ Watch for the following signs, and, if any appear, **take your child to see a physician immediately:**
 - fever higher than 102 °F
 - rapid or difficult breathing
 - severe sore throat
 - new or increased amounts of drooling
 - refusal to swallow or discomfort when lying down
- ◆ Be sure to follow the directions if the physician prescribes medication.
- ◆ Allow your child to continue attending the child care facility if he or she is feeling well enough to take part in the activities.

For additional information contact your local health consultant or health care provider.